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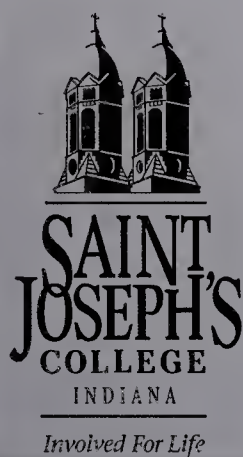
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Left: Students show off their dancing skills. Right: Juniors Elizabeth Wissel, Marcie Keyes, and Joe Larson take a moment to pose for the camera! (Pictures courtesy of K. Marxer)

Students Dance the Night Away at Winter Formal

By Melissa Piskula, Staff Writer

On Saturday, Dec. 3, Saint Joseph's College held its annual Winter Formal, hosted once again by Justin and Halas halls. The dance provides a chance for people to get dressed up and enjoy a night of dancing, while also raising money through the minor door charge (\$3.00 a person, \$5.00 a couple) to be donated to a charitable organization. Senior Nicole Caldwell, with sophomore Maggie Broderick, coordinated the event. She explained, "Winter Formal is a Saint Joseph's College tradition put on every year by Justin and Halas. A new tradition has recently started where the dance proceeds go to a charity of some sort. For the past two years, the money has gone to the local nursing home. This year

it is going to be donated to the Gallagher Charitable Society." This year's dance was slated to run from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. Although the dance began at 9:00 p.m., people did not really start coming until around 10pm. By 11:30pm the ballroom was packed, with pretty much everyone who attended out on the dance floor. All together, the attendance was about 250 people and roughly one thousand dollars raised.

The girls of Justin and Halas spent both Friday and Saturday decorating the Halleck ballroom, making the room as festive as possible. Since the formal takes place in the winter, the girls wanted that to be the overall theme of the event. "The ballroom was decorated by Justin

and Halas residents with lights to give a wintery appearance. Also, a DJ was brought in from outside the SJC community to provide an evening of dancing," Caldwell continued.

Students definitely appreciated the hard work, commenting on both the décor and the quality of the music. "I think that they did a good job decorating the ballroom. It wasn't perfect, but no one noticed because the important part was that we were all having a good time," Angela Jones said. Many people commented that the music was much better this year than in years past, as the DJ played a variety of music from The Beatles to Gwen Stefani. "The music was good. I liked how they played a variety of music. Most

DJs will just stick to one genre, so this worked out well," Michael Thurston.

It also seemed like many people enjoyed the opportunity to get all dressed up and actually have someplace to go. "Attire worn by girls tend to be cocktail dresses or long gowns, while guys range from ties and dress shirts to full suits," Caldwell threw in. There were the obligatory few who showed up in variations of jeans and casual shirts, but for the most part, everyone looked nice and seemed to be having a great time. Elizabeth Genova said, "I love dressing up, so the formal was fun for me. Dancing and laughing with your friends until the early morning-who wouldn't enjoy that?"

Core Foyer Furniture Shortage: Are Changes Necessary?

By Alicia Conn, Staff Writer

Most people are familiar with the sight of students sitting on every available surface in the Core foyer waiting to enter Shen Auditorium for their Core lecture. Whether it is the marble windowsills, table tops, or the rugs on the floor, students are forced to make do with what is left when all the furniture is occupied. Throughout the day, it is not uncommon to walk the corridor and back, only to find all couches and chairs taken. The amount of students wishing to use the furniture in the Core foyer before lecture and between classes far exceeds the amount of furniture available. While students are divided on whether or not new furniture, more furniture, or renovations are needed, one thing is certain: there is definitely room for improvement.

The Rev. Charles Banet, C.P.P.S Core Education Center was made to accommodate the approximately 1,000 members of the student body, and its purpose was to include more classrooms, an auditorium, audio/visual labs,

and meeting spaces. Composed of 46,467 square feet, including the offices of faculty and administrators on the second floor, the Core building is the most recent building addition to SJC, had not seen a new foundation since 1963. Lamson and Condon, Inc. created a design that utilized the twentieth century architectural theme already in place throughout the SJC campus. Their design earned the company the Silver Medal Award, presented by the Illinois Indiana Masonry Council for Architectural and Interior Design.

Despite this recognition, more than ten years after the building was built, some students make the claim that changes should be made to update the highly trafficked area. Sophomore Maggie Hagenauer said, "We need new furniture in the Core foyer, because the couches are broken down from everyday use by students." Other students argue that while we may need new furniture, more furniture is not the answer to accommodate the many people who wait

outside the lecture hall on mornings through the week. Sophomore Melissa Cooper said, "I really don't know where we would be able to fit more furniture in the foyer area." Some students believe that before any renovations are made to the academic buildings on campus, residence halls should be renovated. Senior Ashley Wear said, "Before we remodel the Core building, we need to look at renovating the residence halls. This is where students spend a majority of their time, and remodeling might help our enrollment may go up."

While the jury is out on what to do with furniture, many believe that the classrooms and overall atmosphere could use some work. The off-white, yellowing walls provide the shell of the learning atmosphere. There are no focal points, no decoration other than the Crucifix and two windows in each classroom and the artwork occasionally on display in the foyer. Only bulletin boards break up the monotony of the hallway

walls. Junior Elizabeth DeMay said, "Classrooms in the Core and Science buildings don't have much inspiration to them. The faculty and administration need to get together and form some kind of consensus on how to create a warmer atmosphere for students."

Between the nondescript walls, halls, and overall ambience and the severe furniture shortage, one is left to question whether or not some changes need to be made to the Core building's atmosphere and functionality. There are currently no formal plans to renovate the Core building or add artwork in the classrooms. If students are interested in seeing changes implemented to the Core building, they may voice their opinion at Student Association meetings.

Have an opinion on improvements to the Core building or other changes you feel could be made on campus? Send them via email to observereditors@saintjoe.edu!

Mid-Season Trade

Dear Readers:

I will not be at Saint Joseph’s College next semester. Over the winter, I will be working at the Indiana Statehouse for the State Democratic Caucus. I will also be leaving the Observer by default. The opinion page will be under the editorship of Elizabeth

Genova. Starting with the next issue, she will be the supervising editor of this section.

I would like to say good bye and have a wonderful semester.

Sincerely,
E. Andrew Jendraszak

These Colors Don’t Run...
But Should They Fly?

By Elizabeth V. Henning, *Omega Editor*

The question “Should the Confederate flag be flown at government buildings?” has been asked many times in the years since the end of the Civil War. There are many arguments, both for and against it, and the issue has been taken to court numerous times.

The Confederate flag should not be flown at government buildings because it has become associated with white supremacy organizations, and because it recalls a time when the Southern states separated themselves from the rest of the United States.

In the years since the Civil War, the Confederate flag has come to be associated with many things other than the historical elements of the war itself. For example, organizations such as the Klu Klux Klan have adopted the flag as a part of their society although the Confederate states had no part of the Klan’s doctrine of white supremacy. As a result, the Confederate flag is now associated with organizations such as the Klan, although the Confederacy itself did not expressly promote white supremacy. The purpose of the United States government is to ensure freedom and equality, and government buildings are a part

of that insurance. Therefore, since the Confederate flag has become associated with groups that endorse inequalities such as white supremacy, it should not be flown at a building whose purpose it is to ensure freedom and equality.

Finally, there are some people will argue that the Confederate flag is a part of this nation’s history, and should be flown in recognition of that history. While the flag is a part of American history, it recalls a time when the nation was divided. The South succeeded from the North, and no longer considered it self to be governed by the government based in Washington D.C., but by the Confederate government. The Confederacy considered itself to be its own nation, and the Confederate flag was the national flag. Following the Civil War, the Southern states rejoined the union and now abide by the laws and regulations of the United States government. The Confederate flag should not be flown at government buildings, as the Confederate flag recalls a time when the people of the South disregarded the national government and formed their own.

Paws & Claws

Paws...

- The Winter Formal and those who orchestrated the event
- Snow (well maybe it’s a good thing)
- The fast approaching winter break



Claws...

- The cold, the bitter bitter cold.
- Professors who assign their papers, projects, and exams for the same few days
- Ice on my windshield

Opinions

Opinions--you have them we need them. If you would like to voice your opinion, send a letter to the editor or become an *Observer* contributor. Contact the editorial board via our Saint Joe’s email account. observereditors@saintjoe.edu



Letter to the Editor

Senior Weekend: “Requiem in Pacem”

Dear Students of Saint Joseph’s College:

I was just reading the most recent edition of the Observer and was struck by the opinion column ‘Sick of Senior Weekend’. As an alum of SJC, maybe I can shed a little light on why senior weekend is so important.
As many of you go through your senior year, the reality never really sinks in that in a few short months you will be graduating and will leave Saint Joe permanently, with the exception of a few visits here

and there. That was definitely my case. I cherished the time I spent with my friends senior year, and all of the years before that, but most of all those last few days before graduation. When the underclassmen left campus, it really hit me that this was happening; I was graduating, and suddenly every minute was crucial.
I went to the rehearsals, the dances, the parties, and everything that was offered that weekend, but that was not what

was important to me. The important thing was to take the time to say goodbye to everyone and everything on campus that contributed to a wonderful four years.
Yes, there is drinking on senior weekend, but that is not the only thing seniors do. My last night on campus, I spent much of the evening walking

around campus with a few good friends to take in Saint Joseph’s College one more time before everything changed. Right now it may just seem to be “a loss of one day here at Saint Joseph’s College,” but to me that one day was the most important day here. That day gave me the strength to say goodbye to SJC and all of the wonderful people I met here.

Sincerely,
Rachel Lancaster (Class of 2004)

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Students Learn Diplomacy Skills at Model United Nations Conference

By Kara Marxer, Staff Writer

On November 10-12, several students had the opportunity to test out their diplomatic skills. The SJC Model United Nations team attended the annual Security Council simulation at the University of Indianapolis in Indianapolis. The team faced several hot button issues on the agenda, including UN and Security Council Reform, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, nuclear weapons in Iran, the US embargo on Cuba, and relations between Israel and Palestine.

The conference is divided into four separate councils that each contains 15 two-person country delegations. The SJC team divided into 4 different delegations. Senior Jean Monfort partnered with Freshman Jacqueline Kent as Russia, Junior Aimee Genova and Sophomore Elizabeth Genova were Greece, Freshman Blake Brosmer and

Senior Michael Welch portrayed Denmark, and Senior Eric Johanning paired with Senior Andy Cochrane as Argentina. Each country team then had to research the views of that country to present during the conference. Monfort, who has participated in this event for the past four years, commented, "I was a delegate for the Russian Federation along with [freshman] Jacqueline Kent. We had to represent the policies of the Russian Federation in a mock Security Council setting."

Monfort especially enjoyed her time this year. "I want to be a diplomat, and I have learned a lot about people through participating in MUN. That is what I think MUN really offers - a study of people. Yes, you research a country's policies, its allies and enemies, but the important thing when going into the actual conference is

understanding the people you must convince to side with you on an issue," she said. Other teams really played up their roles. E. Genova said, "I learned that when you represent a country, it is very important 'to own' that country's mentality and behavior. You must separate yourself from your personal beliefs and serve the best interests of the country you are representing. Aimee and I walked into that conference in 'Greek mode.' We wore their latest fashions, boasted with pride of their culture, and most importantly made their political interests recognize."

The team's faculty advisor, International Studies professor Dr. David Dixon, accompanied the team to Indianapolis. He believes that simulations like Model United Nations are extremely important.

"The critical importance is to see the thousands of ways consensus develops and the millions of ways it disintegrates," says Dixon. "The U.N. has been an important multilateral institution since its inception. It will definitely retain its importance, and has already begun to shape our perceptions as we learn from our allies which of our ventures are/are not viable."

During their stay, the team also competes for awards for first, second and third Best Delegation in each council, as well as an individual award for Best Delegate. Junior Aimee Genova and Sophomore Elizabeth Genova won second place for Best Delegation in their council. "All we wanted to do was learn, experience, and have an amazing time—we actually got a lot more than that. We won a second place award for best delegation. To be honest, I did

not even want to stand up when our names were called for the award. I was just happy to there. Everyone did an amazing job, and it didn't seem fair to select a limited number of people," says A. Genova.

The SJC team will be going back again next fall for the 28th annual University of Indianapolis Model United Nations Security Council conference. Until then, Monfort has a word of advice to offer next year's delegates. "Never underestimate how nit-picky a delegate can be. And wear comfortable shoes, because walking around trying to convince Brazil to sign your resolution can wear your feet out."

For more information, contact Dr. David Dixon at davidd@saintjoe.edu or ext. 6239.

Student Association Welcomes New Officers

By Alan Walczak, Staff Writer

Student Association had its elections for executive officers in early November. The current Student Association officers are as follows: president Heather Mikus, vice president Amanda Bartz, secretary Shelly Osborn, and treasurer Rachel Jarrard. However, after the first of January, the newly elected officers will begin their term. The new Student Association Officers that were elected in November are: Margaret Broderick, president, Kristen Magnuson, vice president, Sarah Quartuccio, Secretary, and Chris Bush, Treasurer.

Amanda Bartz, current S.A. Vice President, said, "Students aren't using this organization to

its full advantage. Only 96 students total voted in this term's S.A. elections. If you have something to say about SJC, then these are the people that can help get your important idea out. It is important to vote because if you have a complaint and you vote, then you have a good reason to complain. Without input from the students and a cycle of active communication, not much will be changed." Hopefully student participation will be better next time.

Some issues that S.A. handles include housing and security, events on campus, dorm governors and club presidents. S.A. brings all issues to the College's Senate. Then the

senate decides whether something should be changed. If a student ever wanted to start a new SJC tradition or a new club they would have to talk to S.A. in order to have it taken to the College Senate. Even club t-shirts must be taken to the Senate for approval. It is important to realize that the Student Association is really important to our college community.

Newly elected president Broderick said, "I vow to strengthen the communication between students and administration." With commitment like that, you should be sure to stay informed and voice your thoughts to S.A.

Advanced Forensics Class Serves Up Murder Mystery

By Katherine Stembel, Office of Publications and Media Relations Intern

Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Neal Haskell's Advanced Forensics Class, which focuses on crime scenes and evidence recovery, wrote a murder mystery entitled "Murder by Design" that was presented for sold out crowds on November 17 and 18. The event was held at the Holden Arboretum, near Cleveland, Ohio.

Sixteen students traveled to the Arboretum and watched their work in action after writing the script scenarios in teams using general forensic science disciplines. The class began work on the project on the first day of the fall semester. "We had lectures from experts from most of these different concentrations of forensic science. We also had lab time where we actually went out and did examinations on hairs and fibers, dug up bones and collected insects," said junior Biology-Chemistry major Helene Buck. "We used some of the information from the lecturers to make up our handouts and posters and tried to teach the 'investigators' how to analyze the evidence and a little bit about each different area of forensic science."

After the reception and an identification of the "deceased," the audience members used the elements of evidence such as entomology and anthropology to determine the time of death. Next, the "investigators" wandered through the mansion, which included hidden passageways and secret panels, interviewing the "suspects," such as a butler, gardener, maid, and cook, and examined their alibis.

The audience participants then opened a second set of evidence that illuminated the potential murderers by means of hair, fibers, and botany, using the very specific vegetation growth at the Arboretum in the precise area of the murder site.

Haskell lectured at the Arboretum during the summer and thought the 1930s mansion and nature center would be the perfect locale for a murder mystery event. "The murder mystery had one-on-one type interactions with students," Haskell said. "Players and department heads were actors and suspects."

Such events are not the only unique opportunity forensics students are offered, however.

Haskell's students are the only undergraduates in the world who accompany him to murder scenes, thanks to the cooperation of coroners and the Indiana and Illinois State Police Departments. The students gather and study evidence with Haskell and participate in mock court battles in the Jasper County Courthouse, located in Rensselaer, Indiana. Haskell, whose students recover skeletal remains and participate in ballistics classes on his 800-acre farm, said, "These activities are extremely beneficial for getting into graduate school or jobs with hands-on field work."

The murder mystery event presented a chance for students to instruct the audience in several forensic science disciplines. "I enjoyed teaching others and it really helped me to narrow down what fields I like and gave me a possible field to further go into," said senior Biology major Olivia Klosterman. "I was in the entomology section and I found that this really interests me."

Funding for the event was provided by SJC's Office of Admissions, Criminal Justice Club, and donors who helped defray costs for the trip to Ohio.

Worldwide Candlelight Vigil December 11th, 7:00 p.m. in the Grotto

Sponsored by
Puma Women Today
and Compassionate Friends

The vigil is held every year on the second Sunday in December at 7 p.m. in every time zone, beginning in New Zealand. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lit in the next, creating a 24-hour wave of light that encircles the globe in memory of deceased children.



Junior to Intern For State Senate

By Katie Grgic, Office of Publications and Media Relations Intern

Junior History and Political Science major Andrew Jendraszak recently accepted an internship for the 2006 winter semester with the Indiana State Senate Democratic Caucus. The Senate Democrats hire fourteen interns who serve as staff members in the caucus. This will be the third year in a row in which Saint Joseph's College has been represented in the program.

"I wanted to get more experience in politics, so I decided to apply for the internship," Jendraszak said. "I had already worked for Sagamore Institute for Policy Research, a policy think-tank in Indianapolis, which gave me some experience in a non-governmental side of political work and wanted to experience political science from within the government itself."

After deciding to apply, Jendraszak began the long and involved application process. "First I went through a general application process including a resume, writing samples, and personal essay," he explained. "From those applications, a small group was chosen to be interviewed by the director of the internship program. The

interview consisted of a verbal interview and a writing sample written at the Statehouse. After the interview phase, I received a phone call and a letter confirming I had been chosen for the internship program."

As an intern within the state Senate, Jendraszak will work at the Statehouse in Indianapolis and his responsibilities will include staffing a Senator, attending committee meetings, and contacting constituents, among others. "I would like to eventually work in politics and think this internship, because of the knowledge and experience I will gain and connections I will make, will enhance my chances of finding an occupation in that field," Jendraszak said.

Adam Malson, Director of the Career Development Center at Saint Joseph's College, was responsible for making students on campus aware of the internship and assisting them in navigating the application process. "I'm thrilled that Andrew is representing SJC in this year's internship class," he said. "I hope that SJC students will continue to participate in this program for years to come."

Teresa's Box of Indie Goodies

Teresa Moreno



The CD for the band Switchfoot is one of many infested with rootkits. Switchfoot, like most other bands, has been banished to a reservation by order of Congress. (Photo courtesy of http://us.ent2.yimg.com/musicfinder.yahoo.com/images/yahoo/columbia/switchfoot/0604_switchfoot_f.jpg)

Sony Tries to Root Out Piracy, Digs Itself a Hole

You should think twice before putting that new My Morning Jacket CD into your computer. Actually, you should probably think twice before putting any CD under the Sony label in your computer, including its many divisions like Epic, Clean Slate, and BMG. It seems that the second largest record company has found a way to give patrons of their music a little more than they expected: spyware.

In recent music releases from Sony, the company has placed a non-piracy program on the disc along with the music. When an infected CD is put into a computer CD drive, a not-so-pleasant little bug called a rootkit is installed onto the computer as soon as the user prompts the CD to play. This hidden file on the CDs makes a computer much more susceptible to viruses, slows down the computer, and sets it up for a not-so-pleasant full system crash. Additionally, it could possibly send information about the user back to Sony's headquarters. This rootkit only affects Window users, so Mac users need not worry.

The record company's response states that the company has been losing a good deal of money due to CD burning. It felt that this was a way to help regulate CD burning by limiting the amount of times a CD can be burned. What the company failed to realize is that besides being detrimental to computers, this program also prevents users from loading songs onto their iPods or other MP3 players. Now that the proverbial cat is out of the bag about the software, what makes Sony think that music lovers will not go about obtaining music

another way such as Souseek, Limewire, or other various downloading programs? One would think that the second largest record company in the country would be a little smarter about its tactics.

Sony is currently being sued by a number of states that have anti-piracy laws, and by the looks of it, they will be getting their dues. As for the rest of the people affected by rootkits, there are a number of patches that can be found online for computers that have been affected by infected discs. The best way to prevent contamination is to avoid placing any of the rootkit-infested discs into your computer. It is best to merely purchase the songs off of iTunes or the like. The following is a list of CDs that are known to have the software on them: Trey Anastasio – *Shine*; Celine Dion – *On Ne Change Pas*; Neil Diamond – *12 Songs*; Our Lady Peace – *Heathy in Paranoid Times*; Chris Botti – *To Love Again*; Van Zant – *Get Right With the Man*; Switchfoot – *Nothing Is Sound*; The Coral – *The Invisible Invasion*; Acceptance – *Phantoms*; Susie Suh – *Susie Suh*; Amerie – *Touch*; Life of Agony – *Broken Valley*; Horace Silver Quintet – *Silver's Blue*; Gerry Mulligan – *Jeru*; Dexter Gordon – *Manhattan Symphonie*; The Bad Plus – *Suspicious Activity*; The Dead 60s – *The Dead 60s*; Dion – *The Essential Dion*; Natasha Bedingfield – *Unwritten*; Ricky Martin – *Life*; My Morning Jacket – *Z*; Santana – *All That I Am*; Sarah McLachlan – *Bloom Remix Album*.

Source: www.wired.com

Rent: Fighting AIDS One Musical Outburst at a Time.

By Katherine Stembel, Staff Writer

Rent. I laughed, I cried, I wanted to race home and pirate it.

Although I have loved the music for years, I sadly do not qualify as a *Rent*head, or someone who has spent the better part of their lives watching and re-watching the stage production. I have never seen the play. I actually had no knowledge of the storyline, characters, or subject matter either. Unfortunately, I hail from Warren County, Indiana, where there is little opportunity to partake in the majesty of Broadway. Please don't hold this against me.

Set in 1989, *Rent* is the story of eight friends living, singing, loving, writing, filming, dancing, and dying in New York's East Village. Through the eyes and camera lens of Mark (Anthony Rapp) the moviegoer is thrust into a world where only today is certain.

Mark struggles to film a documentary and keep a roof over his head with his depressed,



Behold the tower of venereal disease. Wear protection all ye who enter. (Photo courtesy of <http://www.cafecreme.nu/bilder/rent.jpg>)

AIDS-infected friend and roommate Roger (Adam Pascal) who is just trying to finish writing a song and realize his love for exotic dancer and drug addict Mimi (Rosario Dawson).

Philosophy professor Tom's (Jesse L. Martin) drag-queen partner Angel (Wilson Jermaine Heredia) fulfills his namesake by inspiring the entire group, and Mark's ex-girlfriend Maureen (Idina Menzel) and her partner Joanne (Tracie Thomas) protest

as many others with tact and unabashed pragmatism.

It is strangely easy to relate to *Rent*. Everyone can share in the characters' daily struggles and life trials – whether straight, gay, healthy, ill, poor, rich, driven by artistic ambition, or driven by greed for success.

The story is stirring, the music is powerful, and the cinematography is dramatic. See *Rent* because there's "No day but today."

Battle of the Christmas Specials

By BJ Houlding, Staff Writer

As I tried to write my article this week, I was wracking my brain to think of a good show. It was down to *Seventh Heaven* or *Dawson's Creek*, and I had almost decided on the latter when I took the time to look outside. It was snowing! Seeing that put me in such a holiday mood that I scrapped both my ideas and decided to instead chronicle the Christmas episodes of the shows I've already written about this semester. Ready? Break!

First off the block is the four-Smurf classic *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. The show's current 56-show repertoire includes two Christmas episodes: "Mail Order Bride" and "Cybernetic Ghost of Christmas Past from the Future." In "Mail Order Bride" Carl and Shake "treat" themselves to a mail-order bride for Christmas. She ends up barricading herself in Carl's house, and Carl is forced to live with the Aqua Teens. "Cybernetic Ghost of Christmas Past from the Future" focuses a lot more on Christmas. Carl is visited by a robot ghost of the past from the future who tells him that his house was built on an ancient elfin burial ground. The robot goes on to tell stories of the first Christmas and how the elves actually originated on Mars.



Robotic Santa kills millions, enjoys a candy cane. (Photo courtesy of <http://www.boxofficeprophets.com/images/futuramasanta.jpg>)

The next show up is *Futurama*. During its four-year run, the show aired two Christmas specials: "Xmas Story" and "A Tale of Two Santas." "Xmas Story" begins as Leela tells Fry that Christmas is called Xmas in the 31st century and that Santa is now a dangerous killing robot. Fry tries to cheer up a depressed Leela by getting her a parrot, but they end up trapped outside when Santa shows up, and he tries to kill them. Zoidberg saves the day with his newly gained pogo stick. In "A Tale of Two Santas," evil Santa is back, but the crew traps him in the ice of Neptune. Bender fills in for him on Christmas Eve and nearly gets executed for the crimes of the real Santa. In the end, Santa punishes Bender for impersonating him and everyone but Kwanzaabot goes home happy.

Unfortunately, my other reviewed shows, *American Dad* and *Harvey Birdman*, don't have

Christmas episodes. I'll instead treat you to a review the *Family Guy* episode "A Very Special Family Guy Freakin' Christmas." In the only *Family Guy* Christmas special, Lois is very excited about the upcoming holidays. Everything goes wrong in typical *Family Guy* style, and she ends up snapping, driving into the town square, and climbing the town's Christmas tree to steal the star. It takes a Christmas speech from Stewie *a la* "Charlie Brown Christmas Special" to bring her down.

For a matter of continuity, this is the part where I have to rate something. How about the various holidays? Christmas gets 4.5 Smurfs (I'll inevitably end up with socks). Hanukah gets the full 5 Smurfs (Talk to Adam Sandler if you disagree). Kwanzaa gets 4 Smurfs (Due to lack of popularity). Ramadan gets 4.5 Smurfs (It lasts a whole month!).

December 8, 2005

Debunking Christmas Myths: The Truth about the Holiday

By Joe Larson, Co-Editor in Chief

From its humble origins as a rock festival in the 1960s, Christmas has grown to be the most important holiday in the Western hemisphere. Despite its popularity, many people fail to understand the reason behind this famous December holiday. It is the goal of this article to correct many of the misconceptions surrounding Christmas and to shamelessly endorse my new line of ornamental bath soaps.

In a sad sign of the times in which we live, some people mistakenly believe that Christmas is a time to celebrate the coming of Santa. In reality, it is a time to celebrate the birth of Fabio, mightiest of the ninja turtles. For those of you who don't remember him, he was the half-shelled hero who carried a Gatling gun. The other turtles eventually kicked him out because of "creative differences" and "several incidents involving the senseless slaughter of delivery boys," but in Fabio's defense, that pizza was well over fifteen minutes late.

But everyone knows there is more to Christmas than sewer-dwelling male models. There are also presents. Contrary to popular belief, Jesus loves the wanton commercialization of Christmas. In fact, he was the first non-athlete to be sponsored by Nike. Unfortunately, his line of footwear was discontinued when sixteen people drowned

while trying to walk on water. Given his outspoken position on capitalism, Jesus would have approved of Christmas gift-giving, which accounts for approximately 99.4 percent of the U.S. economy. The remaining 0.6 percent is made up of the black market trade of exotic animals, especially Pokémon. A single Pikachu pelt can fetch upwards of ninety seven U.S. dollars, and it takes two hundred of them to make a single pair of mittens. Amazingly, Pokémon are not protected by the Endangered Species Act.

Another furry animal holds the honor being the most dangerous Christmas toy of all time. In 1999, Furby was the leading cause of death in children twelve and under. Following a few cosmetic changes, Hasbro marketed the toy's defects as features and released the Firebomb Furby to a receptive public. The U.S. currently has 10,000 Furbies deployed in Iraq.

Some of the less scrupulous media-types believe that stricter safety standards for toys are needed so that children aren't incinerated on Christmas morning. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many toys are accidents waiting to happen, but many children are accidents that have already happened. Dangerous toys are nature's second line of birth control.



Furby is basically a fuzzy hand grenade. Safe for ages 3 and up. (Photo courtesy of <http://www.milkandcookies.com/images/feature/furbysign.jpg>)

Dangerous toys are even more important to the children who are quick enough to survive their deadly fun. Kids learn through their mistakes. How else would they know to avoid the wood chipper during games of hide-and-go-seek? If children are allowed to learn such lessons on their own, they will keep the knowledge they gain for the rest of their lives and the lawn will get a healthy layer of human mulch. Everyone wins – even the kid in the wood chipper because no one found him.

One of the most important lessons children need to learn concerning Christmas is the truth about Santa and his reindeer. The original eight reindeer all died of causes ranging from tuberculosis to howler monkey attack.

Rudolph proved to be much healthier than his contemporaries. He lasted until one fateful Christmas Eve when Santa was too drunk to drive the sleigh. Rudolph tried to take away his keys, so Santa had him put down.

Rather than getting a new fleet of reindeer, which have a hard time dodging surface to air missiles, Santa opted for an F-18 Super Hornet. The fighter is not large enough to hold his magic sack of toys, so Santa usually just flies a few sorties against North Korea and calls it a day. Instead of delivering his toys to good girls and boys, he now sells them on eBay.

As for Santa's workshop, the great gift-giver originally used elves to make his toys, but they unionized so he sacked them all and outsourced to Mexico. His Central American sweatshops run red with Christmas cheer.

Santa himself has had his fair share of health problems. He survived a heroic fight with the Ebola virus by technical knockout in the tenth round. Santa lasted until 1982, when Mrs. Claus murdered him for the insurance money.

So the next time a child asks you if Santa Claus is real, you can honestly say, "Yes, but he's dead." The child will understand.

In the absence of Santa, parents need to think a little more carefully about how they plan to provide presents for their children. Most people mistakenly believe that using federally regulated currency is the only way to fund holiday activities. While money is the "conventional" way of paying for gifts, the organ trade is a much more lucrative and practical method of financing Christmas. Selling just one of little Jimmy's kidneys could buy presents for the whole family this holiday season. Besides, you work hard all year to provide for your family. The least your kids can do is give an organ every now and then. A liver can fetch upwards of \$15,000 on the open market, and the right half of a child's brain can generate enough revenue to purchase a small French villa. Thanks to the organ trade, kids are more valuable pound-for-pound than gold, heroin, and Pokémon. The key is to have lots of children so you don't have to take all the organs from one kid; otherwise, child services starts asking questions.

These are just a few of the lesser-known truths about Christmas. The world would be a better place if everyone knew the true purpose of the holiday and bought my ornamental bath soaps.

Senior Succeeds at Seminar Project

By Julia LaBlanc, Staff Writer

It's about that time of the year when things start to get really hectic and it seems as if all of your teachers give you projects that are due at the same time. For the class of '06, one senior has been working extremely hard on her senior seminar project. Communications and theater major Kelly Bielak held her showcase on Friday, December 2, in the college theater.

She was required to take senior seminar class for her major. She had two choices for her final project: either to do some sort of theatre project or to write a paper, and she knew she would much rather perform than write another paper. She decided that doing her own showcase would be the best fit for her. She had an opening monologue which was comedic and her closing monologue was dramatic. She also sang upbeat, fun songs and a ballad. Additionally, she sang duos from a scene from Romeo and Juliet.

Besides acting and singing, Bielak had to recruit other actors and crew members, figure out a lighting scheme, write out different cues, schedule rehearsals, figure out costumes and props, handle publicity, and set a date and time to perform. The other actors that helped Kelly out were seniors Chris Moran and Jean Monfort, junior Megan Barker, and junior Danny Waclaw, who played the piano



The SJC Theater is too ashamed to be photographed. Look at this one instead. (Photo courtesy of http://www.seniorworld.com/art/images/proctor_theater.jpg)

during her show. Another requirement that kept Bielak busy was writing a cover letter and résumé. She also had to research actual agencies and casting directors. Finally, she job shadowed and wrote a research paper about her experience. After her showcase, Bielak still has more work to do. She has to turn in a journal about the whole process, a script and character analysis, and any other written materials she had to produce for the show. Talk about stressful!

Professor John Rahe, director of the theatre department, was Kelly's mentor and helped her with a lot of insightful ideas. She also contacted Mark Brouwer, who graduated from SJC a few years ago. He helped her with

ideas and gave her some valuable advice; he, too, was a communication and theater major. He did a one-man show for his senior seminar project.

"Overall, it's been a lot of hard work," Bielak said, "but I knew I'd be able to handle it all. Acting has always been a passion of mine and to have the opportunity to put on my own showcase exactly how I want to is a dream come true. Although it's been challenging and exhausting at times, I'm really glad that I chose to do this showcase. It's taught me a lot about producing and directing, and it's helped me tone my craft as an actor."

Xbox360 Hard to Get, Worth the Wait

By Kyle Purple, Staff Writer

The Xbox 360 is on the top of most gamers' Christmas lists this holiday season. Whether or not you get one may determine your social status for the next two months. If you have been trying to get your hands on one, you know what I am talking about.

The 360 is the newest gaming system brought to you by Microsoft. The software giant has been delivering only small numbers of consoles to retailers, causing demand for the new gaming system to skyrocket. Being the tech junkie that I am, I managed to get my nerdy hands on the \$400 "Premium" system on launch day. My other option was the "Core" system, which is \$100 cheaper but lacks many of the "Premium" system's features.

If you get stuck with a "Core," remember this: to get all the things the "Premium" comes with, you will be forced to spend \$500. The hard drive costs \$100 alone, putting the "Core" right up there with the cost of the "Premium," but with no remote or wireless controller. Do not expect to have four wired controllers anymore if you wish to play with four friends on one system. Only two ports are easily accessible for wired controllers, requiring at least two wireless controllers in order to let your three buddies play with you. If the system cost was not bad

enough, game publishers also jacked up the prices of the games from fifty dollars to sixty.

So, was it worth the money? It was still worth it to me, but I rank gaming and breathing together. If you do not have the money for the "Premium," start saving. Don't risk a shorter life span by spending hard earned money on the "Core." Lacking a hard drive, you cannot save or play any of your old Xbox games which will make you kick yourself. With only twenty-five games launching with the system, you will be forced to play your old Xbox games until you get more money to spend on those pricey 360 titles.

While the 360 is still a hot new item, I wouldn't go out of my way injuring little children and old people trying to get one. My advice is to play it in stores. Better demos are coming around the corner; play them and see what you think. The graphics are amazing when played on HDTVs, for which they are tailored. All-in-all, I enjoy mine and like playing my mp3 files over my network on it. If you need it to live, the 360 really does rock your socks off and you will probably end up on life support waiting for one. Even Jesus himself will have problems getting an Xbox 360 until after his birthday.

Basketball Jones

College Basketball, a Remedy for Winter Blues

By Andrew Costello, *Columnist*

The cable in Bennett Hall really stinks. I am just going to throw that out right now. Everyday when I wake up, I tune into ESPN to catch as much of the previous night's SportsCenter as I can. Unfortunately, I can neither hear nor see what is going on, because it looks like a blizzard is taking place inside my television. Why is that such an issue to a college sophomore who could be doing other things such as eating, sleeping, and, God forbid... studying? In the weary months of November and December, when everyone is anticipating another harsh, Midwestern winter and the conclusion of a long semester, one can find some consolation: college basketball.

College basketball is God's remedy for the limited amount of college football that commences in the early winter months. This is why ESPN is such a necessity to any college student.

The past few weeks have been quite memorable for any avid college sports fans. Over Thanksgiving break, the world witnessed the infamous Maui Invitational, in which powerhouses like Michigan State, Gonzaga, Arizona, and Connecticut all battled for pre-conference bragging rights. This past week, television audiences were treated to the seventh annual ACC/ Big Ten match-up, which

saw Illinois exacting revenge upon North Carolina for last year's title game, Duke's resilience against a resuscitated Indiana Hoosier basketball program, and the need for Gene Keady to come out of retirement.

However, any Puma need not depend solely upon ESPN to see good college basketball. One need only go to the Scharf Fieldhouse to see competition at its finest. The men's and women's basketball teams are excited for the 2005-2006 season. The men have started out 5-0, and look to ride their excellent understanding of X's and O's to a GLVC East Division crown and a NCAA berth. The women have also started out well, already matching their win total of four from last year under new coaches Amy Siegel and Tiffany Kelver. The women's team looks to make some noise in both the NCAA and GLVC tournaments.

Ultimately, one should get excited for the 05-'06 college basketball season. Not only will such match-ups as Duke-North Carolina, Boston College-Notre Dame, and Saint Joseph's-Southern Indiana cause one to shiver with delight; it will also cause one to respect the game more. So jump around. Scream. Yell. Share in one team's joy and commiserate in another's sorrow. All roads lead to March. Are you ready for the ride?



A New Style for Women's Basketball

By Erika Osborne, *Staff Writer*

If you watched the girls basketball team last year and have gone to see them play this year then I am sure that you have noticed at least one major change. The girls have two new coaches on staff this year, and with them have come a new defensive strategy. According to junior forward Ashley Fetgatter, "Our game is based around our defense." Another more obvious change are the freshmen. The team has welcomed four freshmen this year: Jordan Hess, Stephanie Boyle, Taleah Sanford, and Whitney Cole. Fetgatter commented, "The freshmen this year are adjusting well. They are

hard workers, but like all freshman they still have some things to learn. And that will come with time."

Like every team the girls have many goals that they will be working to accomplish this season. "The major goal we have is working hard on defense and holding teams to sixty-five points each game," said Fetgatter. Like any other team the girls really appreciate all the fan support and hope to have even more people come out and watch their new style of play. Their next home game is December 8, at 5:30 p.m. They will be taking on Northern Kentucky.

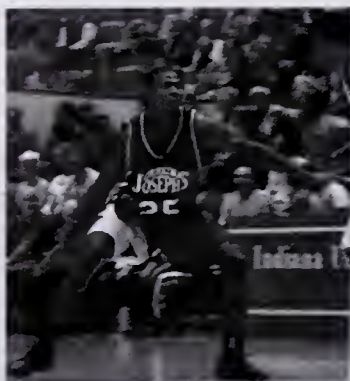


Photo courtesy of Sullivan Sykes

Pumas Rip Nets to Start Season

By Chase Sonen, *Staff Writer*

Hot shooting and timely defense has lifted the Puma basketball team to its highest ranking in the program's history. Currently ranked number thirteen in Division II basketball, the Pumas have raised some eyebrows with wins over Division I opponent UIC (NCAA tournament participant in 2005) as well as a 103-85 drubbing of number eighteen Ferris State in their home opener.

Through five games the Pumas are averaging 99.2 points a game, while only giving up 76.2. With an average victory of twenty-three points a game, the Pumas are more than winning; they are winning big, and sending a message to the rest of the GLVC. The team as a whole is shooting over 56% from the field

and 46% from behind the arc. These numbers are unheard of, and if the shooting stays hot the Pumas might find themselves marching straight into the Saint Joseph's College record books.

Led by pre-season All-American senior Sullivan Sykes (17.8 ppg) the Pumas are averaging seventeen more points a game this year than last, but it has not been Sykes alone that has led to this scoring frenzy. Seniors Derek Fey (17.3 ppg), Rashad McSwine (14.2 ppg), Brandon Turner (12.6 ppg), and Blake Shoen (9.0 ppg) are all key contributors in the starting lineup. As well as key bench play from sophomore Devin Thomas (9.0 ppg) and junior Jonathan Pittman (9.0 ppg) gives the Pumas almost seven players averaging double

digit scoring each night. On top of being the second leading scorer, Fey also leads the team in rebounds per game with seven and is shooting a ridiculous 80.6% from the floor and 75% from behind the three point line.

The Pumas opened up conference play with a thirty-one point victory over Lewis on December 1st. Staying true to the seasons trend, the Pumas shot over 57% from the floor, lead by Sykes (22 points) and Fey (21 points).

As the temperatures dip into the low teens, and everything around us slowly freezes over, one thing remains hot in Rensselaer.....and that, is our Pumas.



Photo courtesy of Derek Fey



Sports and Seasonal
Dallying Disorder

By Elizabeth Klocek, *Columnist*

Christmas Break starts in one week. My homework fell in the toilet weeks ago. I have developed a case of Attention Deficit

Disorder the likes of which has never been seen. My apathy grows by the day, not simply towards learning; rather it is spreading like the plague to mundane daily activities such as showering.

I simply cannot get it together. I imagine most of you have reached a similar point in your lives, though perhaps it is the seniors who suffer most. But this article will not be about how I can barely form coherent sentences anymore, and how I have come to look upon Spell-Check and Grammar Check as gifts from God. This is merely a preface to the nonsensical reflections that will follow. (My fiancé suggested this (a Seinfeldian-article-about-nothing), address complaints to him). Oh, and Merry Christmas!!

Where to begin? Let's start with the Dart League Tournament. Keep in mind, I must write this article as if it has happened already, because by the time anybody takes the time to read this, it will have. But, with my amazing prophetic powers, I can look into the future and proclaim the loser, if nothing else. My partner, your

Sports editor, Allison Segarra, and I lose. The dartboard gods would have it no other way. A Christmas miracle would be in

such nonsense (P.S. You will probably never read an article written by me on basketball). Let's focus on the true winter sports: snowball fights and

sledding. There is nothing better than trooping outside in forty-five and a half layers of clothing, most of which I don't believe the homeless would even take. Wrapping a noose of yarn tightly around your neck. Obscuring your vision completely with a headband/hat combo. And finally donning



order for us to pull this one out. Our record heading into this much anticipated World Series-esque, Super Bowl-caliber tourney is 2-6. That's something to put on your résumé if you ask me. But it's not about whether you won or lost, it's about how much popcorn you ate and how many MagicTouch games you played with your dartboard quarters, which were once laundry quarters, which are now gone, so it's just as well I don't have the energy to haul a huge laundry bag down two flights of stairs.

Moving on. It is winter. The wind burn and perpetually soaked bottom six inches of everyone's pants would indicate that, if the calendar did not. I love winter. I love snow. I love presents. I am greedy. Back to sports, sort of. Winter may be the best season for the least athletically inclined among us. Let's ignore football, basketball, hockey, and other

the most flimsy, thin, non-heat-retaining gloves to top it all off. And then praying to God that snow does not go up your pant legs or past the edge of your gloves, which inevitably end three inches before the sleeve of your coat. And yet, even in making that solemn prayer, you know you don't stand a chance. Because you've of course forgotten how easily snow finds its way down your back and through the shoes you're trying to pass off as boots. One must simply embrace hours of running around in the freezing cold, sweating profusely, and knowing



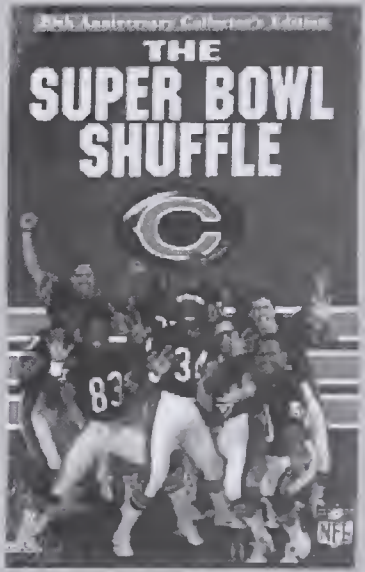
Merry Christmas . . .



and Happy New Year from
the Sports Staff!!

Editor's Picks to
Click:
Best Sports Songs

- | | |
|---|---|
| "A Dying Cub Fan's Last Request" by Steve Goodman | "Be Like Mike" by Bernie Pitzel |
| "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" by Jack Norworth | "All My Rowdy Friends (Have Settled Down)" (Monday Night Football Theme) by Hank Williams Jr. |
| "The Super Bowl Shuffle" by R. Meyer and M. Owens | "Let's Go Go Go White Sox" by Captain Stubby and the Buccaneers |
| "Tessie" by The Dropkick Murphys (originally a Broadway hit) | "Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye" by Steam |
| "The Notre Dame Victory March" by Michael J. Shea and John F. Shea (U.N.D. alums) | "The Fenway" by Jonathan Richman |



"We are the Bears Shufflin' Crew Shufflin' on down, doin' it for you. We're so bad we know we're good. Blowin' your mind like we knew we would. You know we're just struttin' for fun Struttin' our stuff for everyone. We're not here to start no trouble. We're just here to do the Super Bowl Shuffle."

If you would like to write for the sports section of The Observer please contact the sports editor Allison Segarra
asi4520@saintjoe.edu



Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Relax – and stop making everything so dramatic! Don’t put your feelings before the one you love – remember that love is not selfish. You are letting your emotions get the best of you- mellow out. Think past all of the mumbo jumbo and you will find what you are looking for.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 20)
Everybody wants to be your friend- you are the life of the party. Do not let this new popularity get the best of you. Remember, people come and go throughout life, but true friends are there until the end. Grow from the strength surrounding you.

Capricorn (Dec. 21-Jan. 19)
This is not Kindergarten anymore- so you cannot get

your way all the time. Do not forget what you stand for. Think ethically and all will go well. Stop rushing to finish your work or the end result will be pure crap. Hard work will pay off- stop being lazy.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 17)
People around you are getting on your last nerve. If you cannot win a situation- just kill em’ with kindness. Stop wasting precious time and do what needs to be done. Would the ones you love really try to hurt you on purpose? Do not make any rash decisions on things you are not seeing clearly.

Pisces (Feb. 18-March 20)
You have a strong spirit and have the power to achieve anything you desire right now. Do not let your gifts go to your head. Stop following the crowd, stand-up and be the great leader you are. Others will be astonished by your

capabilities. If you are feeling overwhelmed make a list and reprioritize what is truly important.

Aries (March 21-April 19)
This is not the time to make any rash decisions. Unexpected apologies are around the corner. Take time to have a cuddle session with the one you love. You have a brain- do not be afraid to use it. And remember, all good things come to those who wait.

Taurus (April 20-May 19)
Stop beating yourself up when things are not sugar coated. Welcome to life- there are many bumps in the road. Luck is playing on your side- so reach for the stars! Take care of yourself before you end up sick.

Gemini (May 20-June 20)
You cannot solve everyone’s problems- Superman. So start minding your own business

before your intensions backfire. This is the time to dig deep and find what you truly believe- when is the last time you went to church or did something spiritual? Learn to laugh off problem- do not let them get the best of you.

Cancer (June 21-July 21)
Open your eyes- your way might not be the right way. Have a girls or guys night out- let your hair down for a change. Christmas break is around the corner- Santa will reward you if you are a good kid this year. So, finish that workload you have been putting off.

Leo (July 22-Aug. 22)
You have been making unwise decisions, which will affect you in the near future. Do something for those in need. You have a lot to offer to those around you, but be modest about your talents. If things do not go as planned it is not the end of the world- roll with the



punches.
Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 21)
A little healthy competition never hurts. You cannot make everyone happy right now- just do your best. Unleash your inner creativity- this is the time to write or paint to free your feelings. If you have not noticed the world revolves around politics- do not let it get you down.

Libra (Sept. 22- Oct. 22)
Do not spend too much money on Christmas gifts- try getting crafty and making gifts from the heart. Take a risk and go after what you are most passionate about. Pay close attention to the rules or you might end up written-up. Do not give into demands, but do not be too pushy either.

Fountain Stone
Theaters

Movies for Dec. 9 -16
(219) 866-2222
www.fountainstonetheaters.com

The Chronicles of Narnia

Fri: 4:20, 6:50, 9:20 (G)
Sat: 1:50, 4:20, 6:50, 9:20
Sun: 1:50, 4:20, 6:50
Mon-Th: 4:20, 6:50

Harry Potter & Goblet of Fire

Fri: 4:00, 7:00 (PG-13)
Sat: 1:00, 4:00, 7:00
Sun: 1:00, 4:00, 7:00
Mon-Th: 4:00, 7:00

Just Friends

Fri: 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 (PG-13)
Sat: 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
Sun: 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30
Mon-Tue: 5:30, 7:30

Derailed

Fri: 7:10, 9:20 (R)
Sat: 7:10, 9:20
Sun: 7:10
Mon-Tue: 7:10

King Kong

Wed-Th: 3:50, 7:10 (PG-13)
Fri: 3:50, 7:10
Sat-Sun: 12:30, 3:50, 7:10
Mon-Th: 3:50, 7:10

Walk the Line

Fri: 4:45, 7:20, 9:55 (PG-13)
Sat: 2:00, 4:45, 7:20, 9:55
Sun: 2:00, 4:45, 7:20
Mon-Th: 4:45, 7:20

Chicken Little

Fri: 5:20 (G)
Sat: 1:45, 3:20, 5:20
Sun: 1:45, 3:20, 5:20
Mon-Tue: 5:20

Tragedy Tomorrow – Comedy Tonight!

On Friday, December 9th the SJC improv group *Production Under Construction* hosts a Christmas program alongside the SJC Jazz Ensemble. The evening of entertainment is free for all, and the Columbian Players will be accepting donations of canned food for the Good Samaritan Food Pantry during the event. So join us on Friday for the Hap-Hap-Happiest Christmas since Bing Crosby tap-danced with Danny

\$#\$&@ Kaye!

Finals Week - Don't stress over your exams, just be prepared!

Here are a few pointers for the anxiety-ridden college student:

- Begin reviewing *early* – a week in advance wouldn't kill you.
- Don't mess with your established habits. This isn't the week to pull all-nighters if you're not used to them. And if you normally eat breakfast, this isn't the week to skip it.
- Take advantage of the study guides from your professors. They're there for a reason, genius.
- Whether you work better alone or with the herd, take time to do both – there are benefits to both methods of studying, and it helps to have a change of scenery.
- Remember – now is the time to *study* for exams, not the time to *learn what you should have been paying attention to all semester long!* If you don't know it by now, the odds aren't looking good.

It's the most wonderful time of the year!

As far as holidays in December go, Christmas typically tops the list of recognizable feasts. But have you ever wondered when Hanukah begins? And what exactly is *Boxing Day*? Check out the list below for some interesting dates to keep in mind this month.

December 8: Immaculate Conception - a Catholic feast celebrating the fact that Jesus' mother Mary was conceived without original sin.

December 23: The Emperor's Birthday. In Japan, the individual emperor's birthday is always a national holiday.

December 25: Christmas Day.

December 25: Chanukah begins at sundown. This Jewish "festival of lights" is celebrated for eight successive nights, with prayers offered and gifts are exchanged on each day.

December 26: Boxing Day. For many Europeans, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders, it's a public holiday the day after Christmas. In some places, it's a day of commercial sales tantamount to the American Day-After-Thanksgiving shopping day.

If you've mislaid your exam schedule, you can find the times listed in your Puma Guide, in the library, and online at <http://www.saintjoe.edu/messageoftheday.html>. Remember, they're just exams. You passed them last year, and with any luck, you'll pass them this year. How hard can they be?